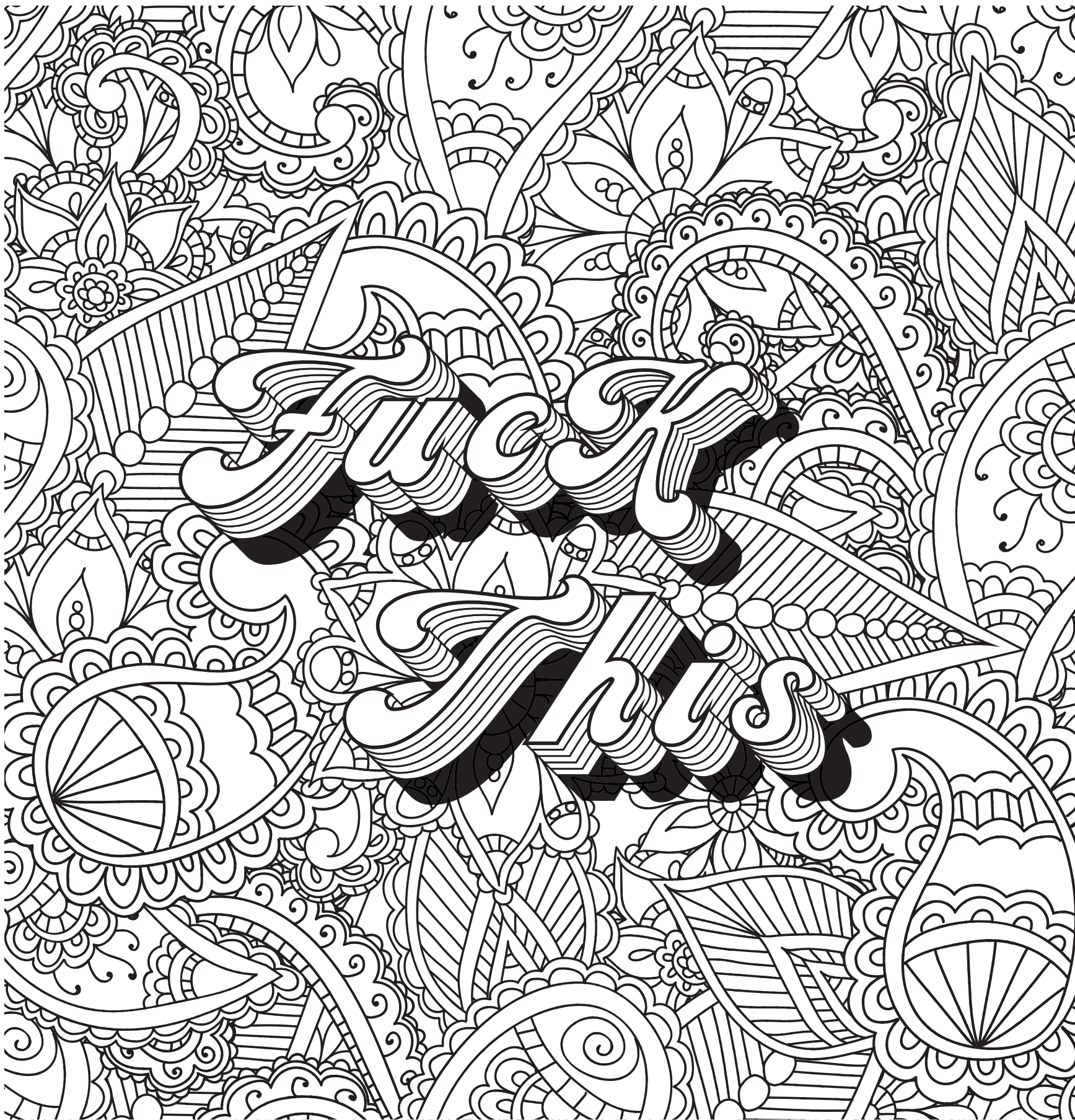


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of the Twin Cities®

(in the Worst of Times)





Because social distancing is hard. Coloring page courtesy of yours truly.

CITY PAGES



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...in the worst of times
By City Pages Staff

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OFFICE HOURS Monday-Friday
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

ISSN 0744-0456. City Pages is published weekly by Star Tribune Media Company, LLC. City Pages is located at 650 3rd Ave. S., Ste. 1300, Minneapolis, MN 55488. City Pages is available free of charge, limited to one copy per reader. Additional copies of the current issue may be purchased at the City Pages office for \$1, payable in advance. No person may, without prior written permission of City Pages, take more than one copy of each City Pages weekly issue. Subscriptions are available for \$100 per year. Subscription orders must include check or money order payable to City Pages, and should be mailed to City Pages Subscriptions, 650 3rd Ave. S., Ste. 1300, Minneapolis, MN 55488. Periodicals postage paid at Minneapolis, Minnesota. Postmaster: Send address changes to City Pages, 650 3rd Ave. S., Ste. 1300, Minneapolis, MN 55488.

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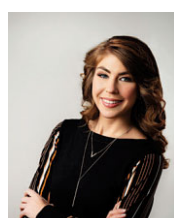
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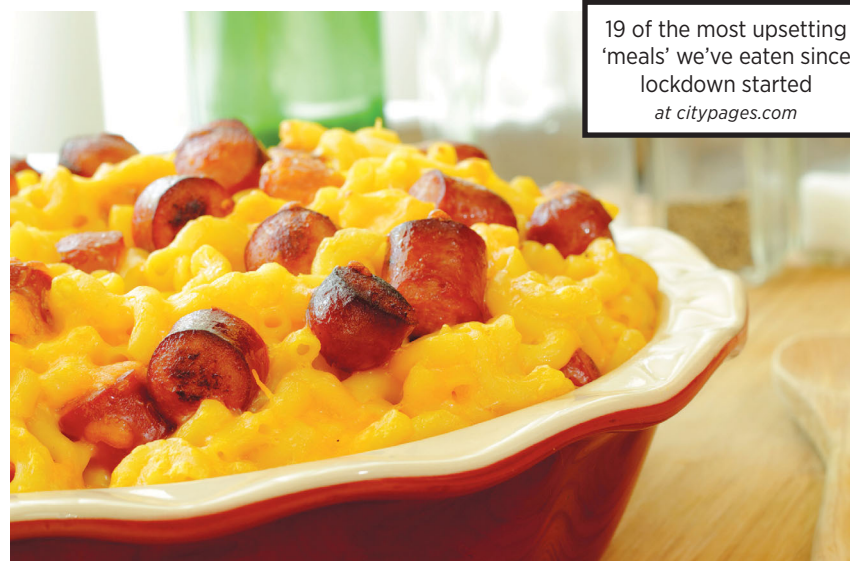
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THE SHORTLIST



19 of the most upsetting 'meals' we've eaten since lockdown started
at citypages.com

GETTY

THE STAT SHEET

83

New confirmed COVID-19 cases in Minnesota Tuesday, the highest single-day total so far

\$1.625 million

Settlement for two Twin Cities whistleblowers who said the VA was cheated out of millions

731

Coronavirus deaths in New York Tuesday, the highest one-day jump so far

50%

Drop in traffic on MN roadways in response to the pandemic

"Party like it's not 2020!"

Reader Conga Head responds to "First Avenue to hold 50th birthday bash online tonight" at citypages.com

TAKE ME OUT?

IT DOESN'T FEEL LIKE spring without baseball—of course, it doesn't feel like normal life at all without restaurants and museums and... everything else. But that first thing might come back (in a modified form) as soon as next month. There's a proposal to have MLB teams play neutral-site games at Arizona's spring training sites and in fan-less stadiums, with players practicing social distancing in the stands instead of the dugout. You could watch them on TV, just not in real life, and electronic balls and strike calling could keep ump's far from the catcher. There'd be no root, root rooting for the home team. But maybe that's better than not rooting at all.

POPULAR STORIES AT CITYPAGES.COM

Wanna buy J.J. Hill's **SPECTACULAR CARRIAGE HOUSE** condo from a famous musician?

It's **ILLEGAL** for Minnesotans to go outside with no reason. Has anyone gotten in trouble?

Anyone recognize these mystery sandwiches that **LIZZO** donated to a Fairview ER?

Minneapolis Police sorry for Facebook post of **'OFFENSIVE' VINTAGE SHIRT**

SUMMER IS CANCELED:
No beaches, no movies in the park, no Pride, no Guthrie

STATE OF ISOLATION

Minnesota might just be flattening that coronavirus curve

There are days when it feels like very little can get us through this wild, weird time, so hopefully this will help.

This self-isolated thing we're doing as a state? It's working.

The University of Washington's Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) has been modeling possible outcomes for the coronavirus outbreak in order to help policymakers and health professionals prepare. At this early stage, nothing is certain.

But current data shows that Minnesota's fatal cases have not been increasing at an exponential rate. We were up to 30 total deaths and just shy of 1,000 confirmed cases as of Monday afternoon.

This is accompanied by state data (reported by the Star Tribune) showing car and bus traffic has been falling every day since March 28, and GPS data mined by a creepy private company says we're doing a great job staying put, too.

At this rate, the IHME model forecasts our total number of deaths at 932—still a tragic number, and more than six times the number of deaths we've seen this flu season, but far lower than our initial estimate of 2,000.

Stat-based think tank City Observatory has taken notice. Out of 53 major metropolitan areas in the United States, the Twin Cities region has been doing remarkably well.

"It arguably has managed (for whatever reason) to keep its incidence low and avoid rapid growth in the number of cases," a report published Saturday said. "As we try to understand the factors that influence the spread of the virus, we might want to consider what distinguishes the Twin Cities from other American cities."

And what might that be? City Observatory couldn't resist joking that Minnesotans have supposedly been "perfecting the art of social distancing for decades." More seriously, Minnesota ranks extremely high on



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measures of "social capital"—that is, the invisible network of trusted relationships that allow people to live and work together as a group.

People have tried to measure social capital from state to state. In 2018, the United States Joint Economic Committee released a Social Capital Index. Minnesota ranked second, just behind Utah and one spot ahead of Wisconsin.

There are many ways to measure social capital. One is "philanthropic health"—how much residents give to one another. That's where Utah stands out. Minnesota's strongest suit happens to be "institutional health"—how confident we are in our government and infrastructure. This plays out

in perennially high voter turnouts and relatively good census participation.

In short, Minnesotans are armored by a certain confidence that the system works, and that doing our part really does make things better. In the age of COVID-19, that's an asset.

Of course, that's just one factor of many that may be swaying the outcome. Others—like population density, median age, overall health, and government response—may also be putting their various thumbs on the scales. Unlike these other variables, we can control over where we go—and how often we go anywhere at all, if it means close encounters with other people—during the crucial weeks and months. —HANNAH JONES

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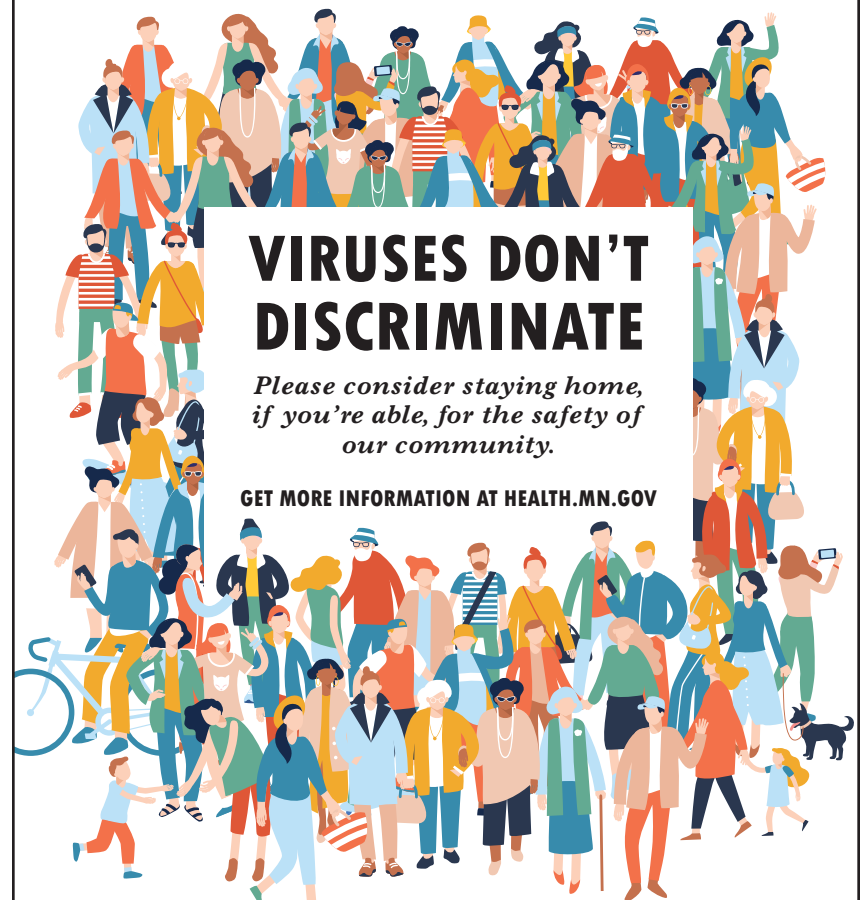
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The Best

of the Twin Cities®



(in the Worst of Times)

BY CITY PAGES STAFF

E

arly each April, City Pages staffers are a stressed-out, frantic, panicked group of lemmings desperately trying to assemble our biggest issue of the year: The Best of the Twin Cities. This April, we're once again stressed-out, frantic, and panicked, but for a *whooooo* other set of reasons. Pandemic! Economic collapse! Toilet paper shortage!

Our annual Best Of issue has, of course, been put on hold. (Not a lot of sense in writing about restaurants people can't try and museums people can't visit and athletes people can't watch.) But then, we had a thought. Why... can't we do

a best of issue? Sure, we've hardly left our homes in three weeks. Yes, everything feels unbearably, crushingly, irrevocably bad. There's still... good... stuff out there though? Right? When was the last time anyone honored the humble can opener?

[Deep sigh]

I don't know, man.

We're trying to keep it light here, shouting out Zoom backgrounds and beans, but goddamn are these some extremely bleak times. Stay safe, stay six feet apart, and focus on flattening that dang curve. Wash your hands. Thank a healthcare worker or grocery store employee.

We'll probably get through this, and we'll see you on the other side. Until then, here's the Best of the Twin Cities in the absolute worst of times.



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Best Place to Enjoy Takeout

Your Car

Once upon a time, this recommendation would have started with a sturdy picnic blanket—an old sheet if hard-pressed—spread with care on a grassy expanse, in a park with a pleasant view. Ideally, a partner would be along for the fun, someone who likes waving maniacally at passing Segway tours. In our New Normal, we're simply pleased as punch that so many takeout options exist for our dining pleasure. The best place to enjoy your haul? That's easy. Only fools are out for clout during a pandemic, and 'gramming has lost lots of its luster, so we recommend enjoying this bounty directly from the box, in your car, while it's still piping fresh, parked (at most) 100 yards from the point of retrieval. Don't forget to take the long way home to appreciate the scenery from your safety bubble.

Best Time to Brush Your Teeth

12:45 p.m.

Absent other people, you can actually fine-tune your hygiene schedule. Mornings are hectic and lunch isn't that far removed from breakfast. So why have your teeth clean for just for that tiny window? Coast with last night's grime until post-lunch, and a fresh mouth will be your reward from immediately after lunch until dinner. Timing is everything here: As soon as the sandwich is down, ram a toothbrush in your mouth and scrub. This truly is the galaxy-brain approach to dentistry, though it should be noted the ADA has not and will never endorse our plan.

Best Kitchen Utensil

Can Opener

Almost no daily tasks can be accomplished without the aid of a coffee pot. However! Upon further investigation, this integral element of modern human existence is most often filed under "Small Kitchen

Appliances," and must therefore be stricken from consideration. Though we do appreciate the timeless appeal and versatility of the wooden spoon, little compares to the clutch performance of a tried-and-tested can opener... especially during our current scenario, in which we've hunkered into kinda-plush bunkers (though we try not to think of it like that). Besides, without a can opener, enjoying the following would be nigh unto impossible.

Best Canned Good

Beans

These days, snagging that last aluminum can from a picked-over grocery shelf feels like inheriting 15 ounces of pure silver. Few items fulfill all three of Joe Pera's requirements for purchase—"Should I eat this? Will I eat this? Can I afford this food?"—like the humble bean. Chickpeas? For sure. Black beans? Hell yeah. Baked beans? If we must. Argue with us all you want here, but what's as universally affordable, perpetually hoardable, shelf-stable, and totally enjoyable like can after can after can after can of beans? JP knows what's up.

Best Method to Avoid Paying Rent

Abolish Private Property

Perhaps this strikes you as a little extreme, and certainly you should try alternate methods first. Call and see if your landlord is a reasonable person (or entity) who'll accept little or no rent. If not, you can get shady: Forget to sign your check, change your phone number, hide in the closet when there's a knock at the door. As a final measure, institute a democratic form of government and see if a market-based economy will consistently create a level of prosperity that allows its citizens access to food, shelter, and healthcare. Oh, you've tried all that already? Well, I guess there's no alternative. Full communism it is.

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Saturday, April 11 || 1:00 pm
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Saturday Matinee

Saturday, April 11 || 8:00 pm
The Invisible Man (2020) Digital
Viewed by an Invisible Audience

Monday, April 13 || 8:00 pm
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A Mystery

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Best Room

The Bathroom

The kitchen is definitely having A Moment thanks to its food, fire, trash can, and beer. The basement, despite its dreary reputation, is also an overlooked prize for those valuing privacy in such cloistered times. Both nonetheless pale in comparison to the dark-horse contender of domesticated “bliss.” For those of us lucky enough to have a roof over our heads, the room where we can carve out *just a little goddamn privacy for fuck’s sake* is the one with a porcelain throne. Yes, the bathroom has hot water providing steamy respite, a door that closes and locks, and comes complete with its very own social stigma that prevents (or delays) anyone from asking what, exactly, you’re doing in there. Plus, in a pinch, the tub can be used as a spot for a little snooze.

Best Way to Rationalize Having a Beer at 4 p.m.

The Governor Said Alcohol Is Essential

You know it, we know it, and now Gov. Tim Walz has said it: Liquor! Stores! Are! Essential! Breweries and distilleries, too! So quick, get thee to Zipp’s or Elevated or South Lyndale Liquors and fill the trunk. Opt for curbside crowler pickup at BlackStack or Bad Weather. Don’t want to leave the house? You can now get delivery from liquor stores like Henry and Son in Northeast, or from breweries like Bauhaus or Falling Knife or HeadFlyer. It’s called supporting small businesses, folks. We’ll drink a late-afternoon beer to that.

Best Food to Eat Directly From the Fridge

Just One Tiny Little Spoonful of Ice Cream

Just a spoonful, that’s all. Just one. A tiny little one. You get good stuff your body needs like calcium and maybe, uh, fruit or something? It’d be like taking medicine, right? And what if you took a spoonful every time you went to the kitchen? After all, how often do you go into the kitchen? And again, we’re talking a tiny little spoonful, right? What could that hurt? And what if maybe you started taking a couple extra trips to the kitchen? Do you see any danger in that? And then two spoonfuls at a time? Occasionally? As a treat? Just so long as they’re tiny little ones.

Best Meme

Leaving the Last One

Minnesotans can’t even hoard right, so ingrained is our fear of looking greedy. Usually, the refusal to grab the last of anything is associated with food. Picture the last doughnut in the break room getting cut in half, then fourths, then eighths, and so on, until an infinitesimal speck of doughnut dust literally evaporates. Turns out, we’ll even do that in a pandemic. As panic shopping habits set in, photos circulated



online of solitary items left unbought: one mandarin orange, one carton of eggs, a lone cucumber, a bag of toilet paper—in one case, shoppers left a potato. One potato! Leaving a single spud is about as useful as taking one home, which is to say, not at all—unless you’re into laughing at your own culture’s well-meaning absurdities. We might as well.

Best Essential Trip Out of the Home

Picking Up Your Anxiety Meds

Here’s a conundrum many of us will face in the coming weeks: You need to pick up your meds, but in order to do so you need to do things that trigger your anxiety, like leaving your house, riding a bus, and put-

ting yourself at risk of exposure. But if anything is essential in these times of chaos, it’s staying on top of your mental health. So know that regardless of what you’re living with—bipolar, depression, general anxiety disorder, schizophrenia—you’re not alone, and your trip to the pharmacy is as critical as a run to the grocery store. We can get through this, but we have to take care of ourselves first.

Best Visual Reminder of What 6 ft. Looks Like

One José Berrios

Not half of José Berrios, not two José Berrios: Exactly one José Berrios. The Minnesota Twins’ ace stands 6-foot-flat, meaning imagining him lying horizontally is the perfect reference point for your human distancing. Now, typically you see Berrios standing tall atop the pitcher’s mound, so for maximum effect, you’ll want to turn your computer sideways while watching highlight clips on YouTube. Start with the 25-year-old righty whipping 11 Ks against the Marlins last July. It might just save your life.

Best Deranged Coping Mechanism

Sending Your Dog Into Flight

This is a tough one. Do we honor the guy who’s carving art in his Oreo icing? The people wearing their wedding dresses to breakfast? The sports visionary who invented Swiffer-Roomba curling? All strong contenders, but we’ve gotta give it up for the family who put enough helium balloons on their dog to lift it into the air like noted aeronaut... [Googles “noted aeronauts”] Stanley Spencer. Truly unhinged, truly chaotic, and a little scientific. You love to see it.

Best Pivot

Distilleries Making Hand Sanitizer

As evidenced by the many cocktail tomes out there, liquor is super versatile. It turns out distilleries are too, as many have added hand sanitizer to the list of things they produce. “Basically we have everything here: bottling equipment, alcohol,” Norseman Distillery’s Scott Ervin told CP. “We started calling around to see if people needed it—hundreds of people did, and we’ve been filling bottles ever since.” As the need for supplies grows critical, local distilleries have tapped in to help. Tattersall, Du Nord, and Brother Justus teamed up to form All Hands—an organization that helps get sanitizer to hospitals, shelters, and other businesses—and Vikre in Duluth and Drake’s Organic Spirits also switched to sanitizer.

Best Way to Induce a Panic Spiral

A Scroll Through Twitter

Check this out: It’s an app, right there on your phone next to the button that



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Best Splurge

Fancy Local Coffee Beans

Remember coffee shops? They were these places where you could go, plop down six bucks on a latte, and pleasantly kill a little time. You might have been alone, but you were alone together with all the baristas and Tinder dates and families and folks on computers. Now that we're *alone* alone, we've taken comfort in recreating the coffee shop experience at home with spendy local beans. Roasteries like Peace and Northern Coffeeworks will deliver right to your door, and most Twin Cities companies (Dogwood, Spyhouse, Five Watt, Bootstrap) offer online ordering if you can't make it to the shop or the co-op.

Best "Essential" Service

GameStop

Yes, we're playing an obscene amount of games during lockdown, but putting staffers at risk so folks can buy a physical copy of Animal Crossing isn't cool. GameStop would disagree. "We believe GameStop is classified as essential retail and therefore is able to remain open during this time," the business reasoned in a staff memo, obtained by tech site Kotaku, on March 19. Counterpoint: bullshit. Even in coronavirus-free times, it's debatable whether GameStop is "essential retail." There's this thing called the internet, see, where online purchases are extremely popular. You can download the brand-new Doom directly to your gaming system without leaving your house. Just close up shop, guys.

Best Hand-Washing Song

John Denver: "Take Me Home, Country Roads"

Have you, too, sung the ABCs innumerable times while scrubbing the flesh off your palms and blessedly opposable digits? (You know what they say: No flesh is safe flesh!) With so much happening in the world, it's easy to zone out somewhere

plays music and the one that tells you what the weather's like, and it contains an endless feed of all the worst possible information there is. It allows you to see thousands of takes on everything from the lies the president told today to the latest unemployment numbers to the current coronavirus death totals. It even provides un-fact-checked "news" from all over the world. But hey, people have been tweeting some pretty good COVID-19 memes lately.

Best Way to Rationalize Having a Beer at 2 p.m.

Accidentally Opened Twitter Stop doing that!

Best Toilet Paper Alternative

A Bidet

To quote CP film critic, clean ass advocate, and objectively correct person Tony Libera: "If my dog shits on the floor, I don't just wipe it up with a paper towel and then go about my day as if it's clean." Get over yourselves, America! Bidets rule. And the TP aisles of Target may be barren for weeks, but you know what's not? Tushy. Dot. Com.

Best Reason to Brush Your Hair

Zoom Meeting

When everyone is banned from nearly all public spaces, there's not much reason to put effort into looking presentable, let alone polished. So yeah, most of us have probably let the grooming slide a little. Your cat/children/live-in boyfriend have already seen you in a no-frills state. Your boss and co-workers, however, presumably haven't, and probably don't want to. So slap on some mascara, put on a bra, and take down your tangled bun and brush out the nest. For the next 40 minutes you can use that "bar on fire" backdrop, but you still gotta be the "this is fine" guy.

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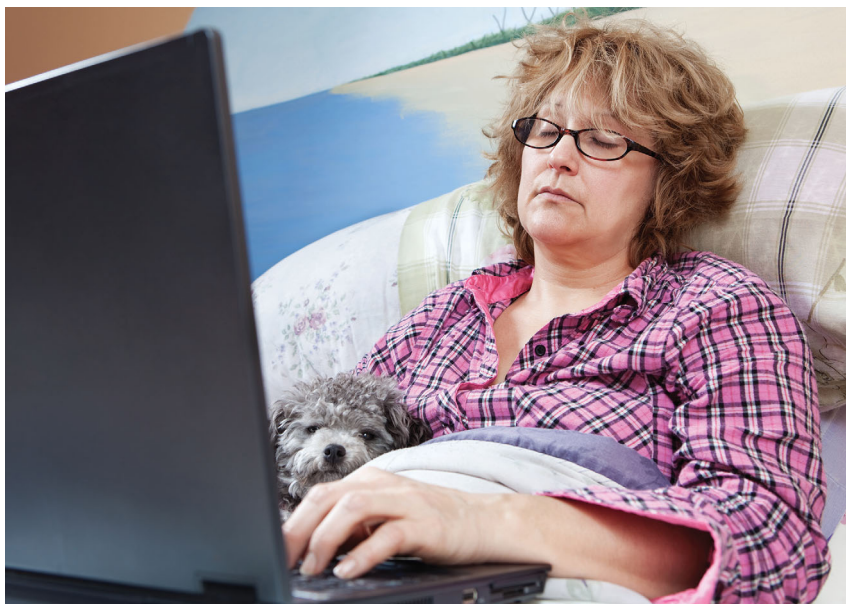
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around the letter “Q” and... bungle the ending, starting a spiral that culminates in concerns over whether coronavirus symptoms include regressing to preschool levels of education. Take it from us: There’s an entire pop canon rife for circumventing this scenario. The best, by far, is one that everyone already sings aloud anyway: “Country roads, take me home/To the place I belong/West Virginia, mountain momma/Take me home, country roads” Don’t rush it. Just close your eyes and bask.

Best-Dressed

No One

Not a single one of us has changed clothes in the past four days, and anyone who says differently is a cop. Even frontline workers like (actual) cops, nurses, and doctors routinely wear the same uniform, day in and day out. And while the unwashed masses wallow in elective sartorial decay, the aforementioned workers are experiencing a shortage of personal protective equipment, causing some to reuse the few supplies they do have. They’d love to change if they could! “This shortage of PPE is a huge problem,” said Governor Walz. “The question is, will they have enough next week? Or more importantly, will they have enough on when the peak is there? At this time, they don’t yet.” This is all a very bad looq at best, and downright deadly at worst.

Best Thing to Hoard

Your Streaming List

We don’t know how long we’re going to be isolated in our homes. You’ve already binge-watched *Tiger King* and *Love Is Blind*. What now? You can only live on *Community* reruns for so long. That’s why it’s important to start rationing the good stuff before you end up with only the shitty seasons of *Shameless* left in your queue. Plan ahead, savor the stuff you’re excited for, and when it comes to passwords, do the opposite of

hoarding—consider sharing logins with friends and family.

Best Bike Path

Literally Anywhere You Can Spread Out

We love you, Chain of Lakes. And you, Stone Arch Bridge. You too, Midtown Greenway. But wow, those photos of people packing every path in the Twin Cities...some of y’all don’t know what six feet looks like and it shows. Our walking and riding trails are so crowded right now we’ve found ourselves biking down Park and Portland to maintain best social distancing practices rather than hopping on the path. Park and Portland, people! Get out there and exercise, 100 percent. Just try to do it somewhere that isn’t teeming with bodies.

Best Goofy Zoom Background

The Oval Office

Who’s the Commander-in-Chief? Your floating head, that’s who! Wield all the powers of the U.S. presidency as you make meeting banter or kick it with the boys... at least visually. Much like Borat when he sat on his king-of-the-castle chair, you’re master of your domain when you’re holding court from the White House. Your colleagues and friends may not respect you now, but the power of this gag, at least implicitly, might change that for the better.

Best Sports Alternative

Reading Old Stats

Watching live sports is really just paying your dues until the payoff: those sweet, sweet statistics. They’re an endless source of enjoyment for the fans: career home runs, Bo Jackson’s 1987 yards-per-carry average of 6.8, the Timberwolves’ depressing season-by-season records. It’s all gravy, baby! Stats tell stories; stats dictate gambling and fantasy; stats are the most interesting thing in the whole dang world. In

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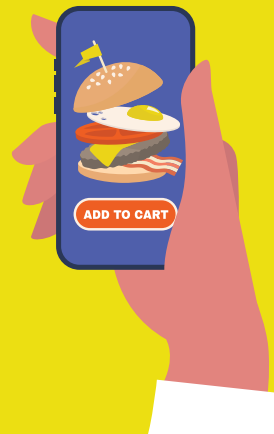


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Best Way to Rationalize Having a Beer at 12 p.m.

Summer's Canceled
It's for the best, but Jesus. No beaches, no pools, no Pride, no cheap shows or patio happy hour at the Guthrie... might as well crack that High Life at high noon.

Best Playground Substitute

A Good Climbing Tree
Kids' daytime hours have now pivoted to screen mode. We know if we don't get them out for some movement, after a few hours they'll turn into small, somehow louder Tasmanian Devils. Options are meager; even outdoor playgrounds are off-limits these days. To keep those climbing muscles in shape, consider the tree. An abundant resource in our northern clime (for now), evergreens in particular often have horizontal, ladder-like branches that make them quite fun (and almost too easy) to clamber up. This pursuit need not be limited to children, either. Turns out the green-veiled view from way up in a tree can really change one's perspective. Make sure to find one away from people, and sanitize your hands after, just in case.

Best Amount of Time to Speak to your Dog

16 Hours
Man's best friend is in hog heaven these days. Dogs, the famously needy beasts we domesticated some number of years ago, love having their masters around, and master ain't got nowhere to go these days. As dog owners already know, the increasing grip of quarantine-induced madness means increased conversations with your pooch.

And ya know what? Fuck it! Dogs may only react with yips and howls, but they're still killer conversationalists in their own wordless way. Go ahead, banter with your dog during every waking hour. Crazy? Hardly. The real craziness is not owning a dog at all.

Best Talking Head

Michael Osterholm
This is Michael Osterholm's moment. As director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy at the University of Minnesota, Osterholm has basically been prepping for exactly this kind of crisis his whole career. As a talking head expert, he's been just about everywhere: CNN, MSNBC, the New York Times, and even Fox News, where he called a Trump appointee's response to equipment shortages "incompetent and absolutely incoherent." Our favorite Osterholm appearance was on *The Joe Rogan Experience*, where he patiently explained that vitamins won't fight coronavirus, and neither will spending 20 minutes in the sauna. Over the course of a 95-minute interview, Rogan said "Wow" nine times, and only suggested we test out a COVID-19 vaccine on "the rapists" once. "Yeah," Osterholm answered. "So anyway, the bottom line..." and on he went, injecting facts into a moment that needs as many as it can get.

Best Tiger King Plot Twist

The One That's Yet to Happen
"Everybody that works here knows what I am talking about, 'cause you've seen his balls," Joe Exotic mused during a eulogy for his dead lover, Travis Maldonado. "They were like golden nuggets to that boy." While that particular plot twist was tragic (sincerely: RIP, Travis), every moment in the lives of *Tiger King*'s key players is a surprise teabagging waiting to happen. Is Joe Exotic going to drop more truth bombs? (Prob-

ably.) Will he get out of jail? (Probably not; some very damning text messages were omitted from the documentary.) Will cold case investigators find new evidence in the disappearance of Carol Baskin's husband? (Ooh!) Will Jeff Lowe bang the nanny while his wife frantically tries to lose weight? (Three-way marriage!) Who knows what we'll find in these nutsacks in the rumored follow-up season.

Best Way to Convince Your Parents to Stay the Fuck Home

Make Them Listen to Bob Dylan's "Murder Most Foul"
Maybe there are Boomers who don't love Bob Dylan. And maybe there are Boomers who don't care about the JFK assassination. But Boomers who aren't interested in either? Not dang likely. In the interest of keeping restless old folks preoccupied, presumably, Dylan released a 17-minute song about the JFK assassination a couple weeks ago—a genuine public service. So if you're afflicted with a free-range mom and dad who insist on showing that ol' virus who's boss, just make them promise they'll listen all the way through before they go traipsing out to share tainted microbes with their pals. Who knows—they might get bored and never even get to the end. And then they can never leave their home again.

Best Wild Animal Trend

Turkey Town
Everyone knows Minneapolis has bands of roving wild turkeys that congregate in neighborhoods, especially Northeast, and give no fucks. Coronavirus cleared the streets, and these modern-day dinosaurs have expanded their turf. One was videoed strolling downtown, jaywalking right in front of an emptied Minneapolis City Hall, as if taunting the city itself. A trio was

photographed crossing West Lake Street in Uptown. One lingered outside Smitten Kitten, another looked in the window of the Eastside Co-op. Be-wattled bands roved residential streets unperturbed. When orders to stay home are lifted and normal life resumes, we will undoubtedly find these bullies thinking every block in the city belongs to them. That's where they're wrong. But, uh, you tell them. Let us know when they're gone.

Best Thing to Touch That's Not Your Face

Your Junk
Look, you don't need us to tell you to masturbate. If you've got a lot of time on your hands, you've got your hands on your genitals a lot of the time. Experts say: That's good! Sex with another person is fraught with peril right now, but you're not gonna give yourself the virus by jacking off. And self-pleasure is also (they say) a way to "boost your confidence" (hmm, not in our experience, but go on) and "strengthen your immune system." Just make sure you wash your hands afterward. I mean, you'll probably want to anyway. We hope.

Best Way to Rationalize Having a Beer at 10 a.m.

World's Ending, Baybeee!
Now, advocating total sicko-mode nihilism as we stare down the apocalypse's gaping maw seems dire and depressing, but... have you seen the news lately? If this ship's going down, we're going down with an ice-cold brewdawg in hand. It's *knocks on the Earth's supply of wood* far more likely the human experiment will persevere than the alternative, so deploy this tongue-in-cheek doomsday logic with a wink and as responsibly as possible. For the time being, an IPA ranks pretty low on the list of things that'll kill ya. ☒

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WILD TIMES: Mickey's Diner close for the first time since 1939

Sure, it's only temporary. But even so...

St. Paul's dining car known for serving no-frills breakfasts, burgers, and shakes has battened its hatches—sorry, latched its ancient cooler doors—like so many others in the face of this wicked pandemic. Though multiple signs in the diner's windows make plain this isn't permanent, that Mickey's has closed *at all* is shocking.

This National Historic Landmark has served food 24 hours a day, 365 days a year since 1939. The diner's current answering machine puts it simply:

"In these unprecedented times, we at Mickey's Diner find, for the first time in our 80-year history, circumstances that cause us to temporarily suspend service to our customers."

William Rivillas, a Mickey's spokesperson who (like many of its employees) wears hats ranging from office manager to dishwasher, explained that, yes, there have been times when service was unavailable to customers before now, but not like this.

"We've closed for scheduled maintenance to clean our hoods—we just close overnight for the night shift. And also I think we closed when they filmed *Jingle All the Way* and the *A Prairie Home Companion* movie," he explained. "We didn't 'close,' but people couldn't come in, basically. But other than that, we've always been open."

This might make Mickey's Minnesota's Waffle House, dressed up in a well-loved vintage disguise. For three generations, Mickey's has always been there, through blizzards, floods, tornadoes, wars... even Lindsay Lohan.

To their credit, Mickey's did not go gentle into that good night... by which we mean for a few days before closing entirely, the car's booth section was shut down, stools were removed to enforce social distancing, and, despite a cherished ban on the practice, Mickey's tried doing carry-out. On March 16, they announced to customers, "We have suspended our policy of 'absolutely no to-go food' and have selected items that travel best to offer to-go."

Just three days later, Mickey's made the difficult decision to reel in the crew, and closed to regroup.

Rivillas revealed that this first, proper closure created a unique problem: "There



SARAH BRUMBLE

was no lock on the door."

Since finding a way to lock their lockless front door, they've been focusing on "nagging maintenance" like cleaning up the front cooler and refinishing some of the car's old wood features. A peek inside reveals the place is mid-deep clean, with its stools reduced to bare posts, and the furthest thing from a flat top full of sizzling burgers and eggs.

"We're kind of playing it by ear right now," says Rivillas. A menu of items well suited for delivery is in the works, some of which may be pulled deep from the historic recipe vaults. They plan to reopen very soon. "We're not closing, that's for sure." Until then, the folks in charge were kind enough to leave all of Mickey's iconic neon and bulbs blazing so the corner of West Seventh and St. Peter streets wouldn't fall into darkness, even in their absence.

—SARAH BRUMBLE

WE'VE GOT THIS: New modular design enhances takeout safety for restaurants

In the immortal words of Christopher Guest as Count Rugen in *The Princess Bride*, "If you haven't got your health, you haven't got anything."

Despite being a turd, Rugen isn't wrong.

As the Twin Cities' restaurant scene navigates the finer points of pivoting to takeout through May 1, many customers fret about the safety of ordering takeout, from a viral perspective.

Serious Eats' Kenji Lopez-Alt assembled a (seriously) comprehensive informational round-up about whether one can become infected with coronavirus from takeout, answering questions like "Am I more likely to get COVID-19 from takeout, delivery, or cooking at home?" and "Is it better to support local businesses by ordering food, or am I only putting workers and delivery people at risk?"

The tldr version, per Donald Schaffner, professor of food science at Rutgers University:

"First it's important to realize that this is a respiratory illness as far as we know. The biggest risk is being around sick people who are shedding the virus when they sneeze or cough. Even if the virus did get onto food, we're going to put that food in our mouth and swallow it so the virus will end up in our stomach. Our stomachs have a low pH which would likely inactivate the virus."

Taking into account all of the above, as

well as this era's pervasive uncertainty, Minneapolis's Muddy Waters found an ingenious way of steering clear of Rugen's Pit of Despair. Uptown's iconic bar, restaurant, and coffee shop, owned by Paddy Whelan and Sarah Schrantz, has adapted to circumstance, including an architectural representation of food safety and security.

Channeling a sense of powerlessness that transcends industries, Schrantz's husband, Sims of Doomtree, collaborated with Street Factory Media to design what they're calling the "Safe Serve Door System." It works like an addition to standard front doors of restaurants and retailers, creating a walk-up "drive-thru" window experience.

For places like Muddy's, its function is simple: The Safe Serve Door reduces physical interaction, thereby limiting the risk of person-to-person exposure, for full service restaurants adapting to curbside and takeout demand.

"We realized a lot of places without a drive-thru were dealing with the same problem and thought we could help," said Matt Kelly, co-founder of Street Factory.

All of this is achieved at minimal cost, without fundamentally altering the building's existing structure. So when this passes—because one day, it will—these Safe Serve Doors can be repurposed as sampling stations for future events.

And, to be clear, this isn't a one-off: They are available to businesses beyond Muddy Waters.

"We're trying to keep as many businesses afloat, and employees in jobs, as we possibly can," says Sims. "Safe Serve Doors are not just applicable to restaurants—all different types of retail could benefit from them. The coolest thing to me is that these are so easily repurposed, so they can live on down the line with a new function. I feel like the gesture shouldn't be wasteful, it should be about adaptability."

To instill a final, visual vote of confidence in all of humanity (but also customers), Muddy's new door is emblazoned on the front with a giant OK sign, on whose fingers are scrawled, "WE'VE GOT THIS."

As Sims explains, "That's a photo of [fellow Doomtree member] Paper Tiger's wife Diana's hand tattoo. She sent that photo to Sarah the other day as a little 'Hang in there bb.'"

Indeed, it is ingenious design concepts like these that will keep us all hanging in there, together, for a long time to come.

Muddy Waters, 2933 Lyndale Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-872-2232 —SARAH BRUMBLE



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A LIST

NORMALLY, A-List is where we run our roundup of recommended happenings in town each week. For this installment, we're spending our time in quarantine trying to figure out why the hell Prince sued someone from *Tiger King*.



EVEN MORE WILD

Why was *Tiger King*'s Jeff Lowe sued by Prince?

BY JAY BOLLER

Like all good Americans, I spent last weekend binge-watching Netflix's *Tiger King: Murder, Mayhem and Madness* while trapped in quarantine.

The mind-blowingly outrageous docuseries follows Joe Exotic, the gay, polygamist, gun-wagging owner of Greater Wynnewood Exotic Animal Park, an Oklahoma zoo with around 200 big cats. One of the principal characters is Jeff Lowe, an Affliction-wearing, Hummer-driving businessman who—SPOILERS!—teams with and later betrays Exotic, helping the feds nab him before completely taking over his zoo.

Starved for additional *Tiger King* content, I started hunting around the internet. Exotic, who's serving 22 years in prison on murder-for-hire and animal welfare convictions, is "absolutely thrilled" with his portrayal; fellow big-cat tycoon Bhagavan "Doc" Antle took issue with "less-than-flattering mistruths"; and

Exotic's arch enemy, Big Cat Rescue boss Carol Baskin, slammed the series as "salacious and sensational."

As for Lowe, he was "slightly concerned that my *Son's Of Anarchy* [SIC] lifestyle might be too much for the average person to handle," but overall felt that filmmakers Eric Goode and Rebecca Chaiklin "did a good job," per now-deleted Facebook posts. Lowe's G.W. Zoo website, it turns out, has been scrubbed of any Joe Exotic mentions, though the MEET THE CEO section revealed a locally angled treat:

"Later in his life, Jeff went on to work with Robbie and Evel Knievel, as well as the musician Prince and several other famous faces."

Wielding the powers of journalism, I called the zoo as soon as it opened. A man answered, and I explained who I was and that I was calling about the Prince connection.

Click.

About five minutes later, I received a

text from an Oklahoma area code.

"Jay, the Prince lawsuit was sealed in a Federal Court," read the text from Lowe. "Prince and I worked it out amicably and that's all that matters. Thanks for your interest."

Um... lawsuit? This was news to me. I gently pressed for additional details, but Lowe said he'd "respectfully pass."

"Prince was a very private person and asked me to respect that," he said. "I promised him I would. Please respect his wishes with me."

At this point, I wondered: Is it possible that Lowe's only connection to Prince is... getting sued by the famously litigious late superstar?

A quick dig through federal court records unearthed the 2007 lawsuit that Lowe had alluded to. At the time, Lowe ran Beaufort Liquidation, a flea market in Beaufort, South Carolina, where he annoyed county officials by showcasing big cats. The store's online offshoot,

Club Returns, once attempted to sell off artifacts that previously belonged to Prince—stage-worn outfits, shoes, etc.—that it had acquired from a third party.

Curious to know more, we reached out to Dale Akins, the South Carolina lawyer that Prince's Minneapolis-based legal team tasked with handling the lawsuit against Lowe. When Akins received the call from a Miami lawyer about representing Prince, he assumed he was being pranked by a friend.

"[Prince's rep] says: 'You familiar with Prince?' And I say, 'Yeah man, I saw the damn Super Bowl!'" Akins remembers.

"Prince and I worked it out amicably and that's all that matters."

"And there was this long pause and I thought... oh my God, this is real."

The lawsuit, which centered on Lowe violating Prince's copyright by using the Love Symbol, was resolved without much fuss, Akins reports, ending in an out-of-court settlement. Akins has also read the Prince boast on Lowe's zoo's website, and he has his suspicions.

"The thing about him working with Prince... I'm not gonna call him a liar, but based on any information I have, he never worked for Prince—unless you call getting sued working for him," says Akins, who was "absolutely blown away" by *Tiger King*.

The good-natured Southern lawyer correctly predicted that the baller lifestyle Lowe enjoyed early on in *Tiger King* was "bullshit," but he politely declined to speak on his impressions of Lowe circa 2007—at least at first.

"Try not to get me in trouble, OK?" Akins said. "Because he's... I don't wanna say anything disparaging about him."

Three minutes later, Akins's number flashed across my phone again.

"And in retrospect," he said with a laugh, "you can go ahead and quote me saying, in my opinion, he was a very sketchy individual." ☒



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The Replacements in 2013



TONY NELSON

With the bars, clubs, theaters, and arenas shut down for longer than anyone's ready to admit right now, live music is on indefinite hiatus.

Since we've got no new shows to enjoy or review, our staff decided to wrack its collective memory and share some of our favorite live music experiences of all time. Hope this helps you get through the current gig drought.

THE RIGHTEOUS BROTHERS

Filene Center
Wolf Trap, Virginia
1991

When I was 12 years old, I went to see the Righteous Brothers. I wasn't supposed to be there; the concert tickets were a 40th anniversary gift from my grandpa to my grandma. But right before the big date, my

grandma was in a car wreck that left her laid up with a broken leg and wrist, so, my grandpa took me instead. I thought I was going into an old folks' concert blind, but I soon realized that I was very familiar with the Righteous Brothers' catalog. I knew "You've Lost That Lovin' Feeling" thanks to Rebecca Howe on *Cheers*, "Unchained Melody" from the (super scandalous!) sex

scene in *Ghost*, and Bill Medley's solo hit "(I've Had) the Time of My Life" was from *Dirty Dancing*. My grandpa was amused and delighted each time I recognized another song, and we had a great time laughing at a group of drunk women dancing behind us. When we got home, grandma informed us that we had forgotten to hand her the TV remote, so she had spent her evening

THE BEST CONCERTS WE EVER SAW

Remembering what it was like when there was still live music

BY CITY PAGES STAFF

watching—and thoroughly enjoying!—*Beverly Hills 90210* and *Melrose Place*.

—JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

THE REPLACEMENTS

Riot Fest
2013

It could have been a total disaster. Under the best circumstances, reunion shows tend to produce mixed results, and the self-sabotaging, booze-guzzling, eternally smirking Replacements had a notoriously unpredictable live show during their initial 1979-91 run. But in the post-downpour darkness on a perfect autumn night, the Minneapolis rock legends turned Chicago's Humboldt Park into a joyous time machine, conjuring everything that made them great back to life. The moment Paul Westerberg and Tommy Stinson stormed on stage with "Takin' a Ride," a smile was plastered to my face. Throughout the band's

first U.S. gig in 22 years, the heyday-era hits (“Androgynous,” “Bastards of Young,” “Alex Chilton”) exploded with vitality and intensity; Westerberg’s twinkling, mischievous charm was ever-present. (“Fuck the clock!” he said, tossing the digital set-timer across the stage.”I’m an old hand, a music business professional.”) The euphoric CTA bus ride back to the hotel, Mats fanatics beaming should-to-shoulder, was evidence enough that we saw something special. —JAY BOLLER

DEATH GRIPS

First Avenue
2015

A couple minutes before Death Grips’ MC Ride/Stefan Burnett and Zach Hill ducked their hoodies into First Avenue, an audience member threw a shoe onto the empty Mainroom stage—even without opening acts, the crowd’s hype level started at 19/10. A circle pit engulfed the floor while the duo barreled from one song directly into the next. They didn’t soundcheck, so it was basically a basement show with 2,000 people and better amps.

Ride—slick and dressed only in pants—looked like a praying mantis priming us for sacrifice, with lightning rods for elbows. (I’d searched for pics to prove this to friends and discovered he’d booted and cracked a CP photographer’s lens.) In parting, the band barked just one word: “THANKS.” Old timers at the club said it was the worst show they’d seen in years. I remain awestruck to this day. —SARAH BRUMBLE

SNOWING

Broken World Fest
2016

Loving ~emo revival~ means spending your suburban youth obsessing over a lot of bands who broke up after exactly one full-length, and being a suburban youth means you got to see some of those bands just once (if that). But if you’re able to retain your angst and idiocy through adulthood, you might have the chance to drive 12 hours for the reunion of a band that’s recorded like 17 total songs.

Such was the case for my me and my friend Kyle in 2016, when we traveled from Somerville, Massachusetts, to Pittsburgh for Broken World Fest. The weekend boasted a truly historic sadboi lineup: TWIABP, Into It. Over It., Rozwell Kid, Pinegrove, Prince Daddy & the Hyena. But we made the trip for Snowing—the twinkly pride of greater Philadelphia—who were reuniting to headline the fest.

You can guess how things went from there. I laughed, I cried, I got sweat all over my friends. I didn’t take one photo during the set, but there is evidence of me looking dumb as hell with a “Snowing 7:16” foam finger after it. Before the weekend



Robyn in 2019

CARLOS GONZALEZ/STAR TRIBUNE

was out, we’d bought tickets to see their final final reunion in PA’s Lehigh Valley.

Hey, at least that drive was only... nine hours? —EMILY CASSEL

PJ HARVEY

The Academy, New York City
1993

I’ve seen a lot of live music because 1) I am old and 2) it’s my job. But for all the hours I’ve spent watching musicians onstage, I’ve got comparatively few bragging moments—you know, those rare glimpses of an artist in their prime that you get to lord over the younger and less fortunate. I did see Polly Harvey with her trio just after the release of *Rid of Me*, though, when she was a guitarist like none other, an idiosyncratic virtuoso in absolute control of her instrument. Little did I know the trio would be short-lived: The next time I caught Harvey, just two years later in Seattle, she was in a red dress sinuously dancing along to *To Bring You My Love*, no guitar in sight. And she was magnetic then too, as she was the several times I’ve seen her since, so it’d be unfair to say that her early stint as a rock bandleader was her peak. But it was a moment she’d never duplicate, and I get to brag.

Oh, some guys called “Radiohead” also performed that night. —KEITH HARRIS

ROBYN

Palace Theatre
2019

There were long ribbons of translucent fabric cascading across the stage, a large sculpture of hands, and rippling lighting. The band’s outfits were white or silver

and the instruments were either clear or white. These visuals were futuristic, dreamy, and what I can only describe as: an absolute vibe.

I spent a while weaving through the packed crowd to find the best view. The crowd was full of glitter-clad twenty-somethings and burly bearded men. (“There are a ton of bears here, you’d love it,” I texted my friend.) Robyn performed the hell out of the show: incredible vocals, costume changes, and lush dancing. It looked like she genuinely loved the show as much as we did.

I wondered how many times I belted out “Call Your Girlfriend” at queer dance parties over the years. I got emotional realizing that she’s given us music that is vulnerable and energetic since the ‘90s. You can cry or dance to her music and I did a lot of both that night. In the middle of this euphoric utopia someone spilled a beer down my arm. I didn’t mind. —SHELBY LANO

THE FUGEES

First Avenue
1996

One of the best shows I ever saw was also the one that taught me to respect the dangers of crowds. It was a cold winter night and the Fugees, at the height of their game having released *The Score* earlier that year, were headlining First Avenue. Opening were the Roots and Atlanta hip-hop group Goodie Mob, featuring Cee-Lo Green. All of these people were very cool at the time. (This was before... a lot of things.)

The crush of humanity began outside the club; there were no polite lines around each corner as has become typical, but a scrum of

very excited fans mobbing the area in front of the doors. As a short person, I have plenty of complaints about concert-going, and a top one is breathing the stale air around most people’s shoulder-heights. (I try not to even think about trampling situations.) In this tightly packed mass, I was feeling a little ill and overheated already.

Inside the club was better at first; there was a little room to move around. Goodie Mob played an energetic set for an engaged audience; the night’s overall vibe was very time-of-your-life. Sometime after the Roots took the stage (with their *instruments!*), I was near the back of the room, still wearing a heavy wool coat, moving farther from the stage in search of fresh air. One moment I was saying, “I think I need to sit down” as my vision got tunnel-y, the next I was on the bench in the Entry, puking on the floor. (I want to say in my defense that I’d had only one drink, but, full disclosure, it was a stiff rum and Coke on an empty stomach.) My date was a little freaked about the fainting and ready to get me home, but I hadn’t seen the Fugees yet. After a short rest and a glass of water I was able to stand, then was revived completely by a few crisp winter minutes outdoors.

The headliners commanded the room’s attention with their recent hits but indulged in some playful moments too. Hearing the strong, luminous voice of Ms. Lauryn Hill live and in person was just as impressive and transformative as I’d hoped (and later proved the same at her solo First Ave gigs). And while some of the male artists on stage that night have in the years since become dorks and/or been revealed as assholes, the undeniable cool of Ms. Hill remains untarnished. —BRIDGETTE REINSMOEN

PEARL JAM

Marquette University Varsity Theatre, Milwaukee
1992

This was originally scheduled as a free gig at Marquette’s student union. Then *Ten* took off and the show relocated to the Varsity Theatre to accommodate a couple hundred fans. Pearl Jam tore through nine tracks from their debut, including simmering opener “Oceans,” the only time I’ve seen them play it in the 20+ times I’ve seen them since. They also ripped into two explosive new songs, “State of Love and Trust” and “Leash,” proving they had more to offer us in the future. PJ paid rousing tributes to their influences, covering Neil Young’s “Rocking in the Free World,” and closing with the Beatles’ “I’ve Got a Feeling,” with Smashing Pumpkins drummer Jimmy Chamberlain and Eddie Vedder’s younger brother joining in the fun. The show felt like a communal celebration as well as a seismic shift in the direction modern music was heading. —ERIK THOMPSON

♈ ARIES (March 21-April 19): Moses did forty years' worth of hard work in behalf of his people, delivering them out of slavery in Egypt. Yet God didn't allow him to enter into the Promised Land. Why? At the end of his travels, he made a minor mistake that angered God beyond reason. Petty? Harsh? Very much so. I'm happy to say that your fate will be very different from Moses'. Some months from now, when your labors bring you to the brink of your own personal version of the Promised Land, not even a small error will prevent you from entering and enjoying it. And what you do in the coming weeks will help ensure that later success.

♉ TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Built in the third century B.C., the Colossus of Rhodes was a monumental statue of the Greek sun god. It stood in the harbor of the island of Rhodes, and was called one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Alas: An earthquake struck the area 54 years after it was finished, knocking it over and smashing it into fragments. Three centuries later, many of the chunks still lay scattered around the harbor. I offer this as a teaching story, Taurus. If there are any old psychological ruins lying around in your psyche, I encourage you to conduct an imaginary ritual in which you visualize throwing those ruins into a big bonfire. Clear the slate for the new beginnings that will be available once the COVID-19 crisis has settled down.

♊ GEMINI (May 21-June 20): "Argue with anything else," writes author Philip Pullman, "but don't argue with your own nature." Amen! That's always good advice for you Geminis, and it will be especially crucial in the coming weeks. A certain amount of disputation and challenging dialogue with other people will be healthy for you, even an effective way to get clarity and advance your aims. (Don't overdo it, of course.) But you must promise never to quarrel with or criticize your own nature. You should aim at being a radiant bastion of inner harmony and a powerhouse of self-love. Do whatever's necessary to coax all your different aspects to work together in sweet unity.

♋ CANCER (June 21-July 22): Like many Cancerians, painter Marc Chagall cultivated an intimate relationship with his dreams and fantasies. His fellow artist Pablo Picasso remarked, "When Chagall paints, you do not know if he is asleep or awake. Somewhere or other inside his head there must be an angel." Being a Crab myself, I know how essential it is for us to be in close connection with reverie and the imagination. Every now and then, though, there come occasions when the demands of the material world need our extra, focused attention--when our dreamy tendencies need to be rigorously harnessed in behalf of pragmatism. Now is one of those times.

♌ LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Is there an influence you're ready to outgrow, Leo? Are there teachers who have given you all they have to offer, and now you need to go in search of new founts of inspiration and education? Have you squeezed all possible value out of certain bright ideas and clever theories that no longer serve you? Are you finished with old sources of excitement that have lost their excitement? These are the kinds of questions I encourage you to ask yourself in the coming weeks. It'll be a favorable time to celebrate the joyful art of liberation--to graduate from what might have been true once upon a time, and prepare for the wide-open future after the COVID-19 crisis has mellowed.

♍ VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Your words of power in the coming days are simple: deep, low, down, below, dig, dive, and descend. I invite you to meditate on all the ways you can make them work for you as metaphors and use them to activate interesting, nourishing feelings. There'll be very little worth exploring on the surface of life in the coming weeks, Virgo. All the hottest action and most valuable lessons will be blooming in the fertile darkness.

♎ LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Before the COVID-19 crisis arrived, were you ensconced in roles that were good fits for your specific temperament and set of talents? Did you occupy niches that brought out the best in you and enabled you to offer your best gifts? Were there places that you experienced as power spots--where you felt at home in the world and at peace with your destiny? Once you've meditated on those questions for a while, Libra, I'll ask you to shift gears: Meditate on how you'd like to answer similar questions about your life in the future. Once this crazy time has passed, what roles will be good fits for you? What niches will bring out the best in you? What will be your power spots?

♏ SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): "Fen" is a word that's not used much these days. It means a marsh or a boggy lowland. Decades ago, Scorpio poet Marianne Moore used it in a short poem. She wrote, "If you will tell me why the fen appears impassable, I will tell you why I think that I can cross it if I try." In my opinion, that's an apt battle cry for you right now. You shouldn't be upset if people tell you that certain things are impossible for you to do. You should be grateful! Their discouragement will rile up your deep intelligence and inspire you to figure out how you can indeed do those things.

♐ SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): "Goodness alone is never enough," wrote author Robert A. Heinlein. "A hard, cold wisdom is required for goodness to accomplish good. Goodness without wisdom always accomplishes evil." I think that's an interesting thought for you to consider during the coming weeks, Sagittarius. If you want your care and compassion to be effective, you'll have to synergize them with tough intelligence. You may even need to be a bit ferocious as you strive to ensure that your worthy intentions succeed and the people you love get what they need.

♑ CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Are there any ways in which you have been wishy-washy in standing up for what you believe in? Have you shied away from declaring your true thoughts and feelings about important issues that affect you and the people you care about? Have you compromised your commitment to authenticity and integrity for the sake of your ambition or financial gain? In asking you these questions, I am not implying that the answers are yes. But if in fact you have engaged in even a small amount of any of those behaviors, now is an excellent time to make corrections. As much as possible, Capricorn, focus on being trustworthy and transparent.

♒ AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Physicist Edward Teller believed there is no such thing as "exact science." And in his view, that's a good thing. "Science has always been full of mistakes," he said. But he added that they're mostly "good mistakes," motivating scientists to push closer toward the truth. Each new mistake is a better mistake than the last, and explains the available evidence with more accuracy. I suspect that you've been going through a similar process in your personal life, Aquarius. And I predict that the good mistakes you've recently made will prove to be useful in the long run.

♓ PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Few astrologers would say that you Pisceans are masters of the obvious or connoisseurs of simplicity. You're not typically renowned for efficiency or celebrated for directness. Your strength is more likely to be rooted in your emotional riches, your ability to create and appreciate beauty, your power to generate big dreams, and your lyrical perspective on life. So my oracle for you this time may be a bit surprising. I predict that in the coming weeks, your classic attributes will be very useful when applied to well-grounded, down-to-earth activities. Your deep feelings and robust imagination can be indispensable assets in your hard work on the nuts and bolts.

CROSSWORD

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57			58						59					
60							61							
62							63							

SAY YES

BY BRENDAN EMMETT QUIGLEY

Across

- 1 Pilate released him
- 9 Jumped
- 15 City that was the planned capital of Australia
- 16 High as a helicopter
- 17 Really big, totally singular sparkling bit on a dancer's costume?
- 19 Muscular dude
- 20 Fashion editor Vreeland
- 21 Troy engineering sch.
- 22 Daisy's character
- 23 More white
- 25 Mal de ___
- 26 Gives power to
- 30 Year in dating
- 31 England's patron
- 33 Tonsillitis specialist
- 35 Follows a Judaic God side-by-side?

- 40 Types out a conversation
- 41 In single file
- 42 Wine cork
- 45 Give off
- 46 Propeller that comes in pairs
- 47 Whence a "tall and tan and young and lovely" girl
- 50 British legal deg.
- 51 "You ... mother ..."
- 52 Hot shot?
- 55 ___-feuille (pastry)
- 57 Cereal sold at rock shows?

- 60 South Korea's second-largest airline
- 61 Endures, as a storm
- 62 Go raging, full on
- 63 Old soldier

Down

- 1 One might come before a bedtime story
- 2 Follow closely
- 3 Come back out, after a long absence
- 4 Big name in makeup
- 5 ___ Capital (investment firm co-founded by Mitt Romney)
- 6 Really important
- 7 Problem Aderrall treats
- 8 Org. that probes outer-space life
- 9 Statesman Mubarak
- 10 Athlete with the Shaq Attaq shoe brands
- 11 Immediately, briefly
- 12 Arrive en masse
- 13 Treatment for anaphylaxis
- 14 "Joker" co-star
- 18 Thanksgiving side
- 24 Paris Hilton's mom
- 25 Canned food additive
- 26 Shaving cream application
- 27 Domain.com purchases
- 28 Inflated sense of worth
- 29 China from America
- 32 Affix one's John Hancock to a digital PDF, say

- 33 Looked over
- 34 Local cinema, slangily (please stay in business)
- 36 Ox lookalike
- 37 More like a mammoth
- 38 Bad influences
- 39 Not for him
- 42 ___ Rescue (zoo in "Tiger King")
- 43 Rebelled
- 44 Land you need to be in the closet to get to
- 45 Rising point
- 48 Reese's "Little Fires Everywhere" role
- 49 French Revolution figure Jean-Paul
- 50 Collectible art print, briefly
- 53 "Dis-guuust-ing!"
- 54 Large ratite bird
- 55 "I was told there wouldn't be ___"
- 56 Being, in Latin class
- 58 Tired road runner
- 59 Discrimination

Last Week's Answer

A	D	S		A	F	L	C	I	O		A	L	D	O			
R	A	T		S	T	E	R	N	A		N	A	Y	A			
C	H	U	C	K	S	T	E	A	K		J	U	N	K			
A	L	A	S				S	R	S		O	R	A	L			
D	I	R	T	Y	R	I	C	E		S	U	E	M	E			
E	A	T		O	O	O		A	S	H		L	O	Y			
							D	U	A	N	E	H	E	R	E		
							T	O	S	S	E	D	S	A	L	A	D
							D	O	N	U	T		S	U	R	L	Y
S	O	R		C	S	A		L	E	A		T	M	I			
A	W	A	L	K			S	O	U	R	C	R	E	A	M		
W	N	B	A		A	T	T				E	A	R	N			
F	O	O	D		S	H	O	O	F	L	Y	P	T	E			
I	N	R	E		A	M	E	C	H	E		O	S	X			
T	E	A	R		P	A	S	T	A	S		T	A	T			

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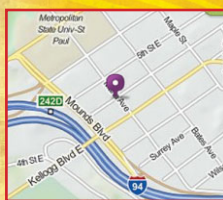


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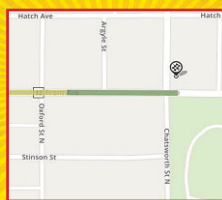
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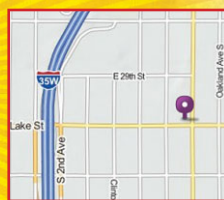
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Gut Feeling

Can I get rid of my gross big belly fetish?



Dan Savage

I have a kink/fetish that's been giving me a lot of anxiety. I inadvertently discovered that I'm turned on by big bellies, weight gain, and stuffing. It's been there since I was a kid, though I didn't understand it until now. I'm a female in my mid-20s, in a heterosexual monogamous relationship. My problem is that I have a lot of trouble getting off without looking at pictures or at least thinking about my kink. I believe the common guidance is, "If it's not hurting anyone, it's fine." But I feel super gross and ashamed. Neither my partner nor myself is large and we both value our health and fitness. I have no desire to participate in this activity with a real person. Every time I finish masturbating, I feel embarrassed and disgusted. Some part of my brain obviously craves the kink, but the rest of me HATES it. I keep telling myself I will stop, but I have such a hard time getting off with other porn (or without porn) that I always return to it. I genuinely enjoy having vanilla sex with my partner. I feel turned on and I have fun. But I'm often not able to come. It sometimes makes him think he isn't doing a good job, when in reality he's doing great and I'm just frustrated with my body. I'm wondering: Does continuing to watch belly porn reinforce the kink in my brain? Should I stop watching it and force myself to find other ways to come? Should I find a way to embrace the kink?

BIG BELLY WOES

Six years ago I roped Dr. Jesse Bering, author of *Perv: The Sexual Deviant in All of Us*, into answering a question from a dad who was worried about his teenage son's sexual interest in Pokémon. Dad wanted to know if anything could be done about his son's "pathetic" sexual obsession. Bering explained that kinks are hardwired. "Nobody knows why some people are more prone to developing unusual patterns of attraction than others," Bering said. "But whether it's a penchant for Pokémon, feet, underwear, or spiders, the best available evidence suggests that some people—mostly males—have a genetic predisposition for being 'sexually imprinted' during development."

Once our erotic imaginations have seized on something, there's not much we can do about it. Before we're adults—before we hit puberty—our kinks, as Bering put it, are "pretty much fixed, like it or not."

For all we know, the boy with the Pokémon fetish was completely comfortable with his own niche sexual interests. The dad wrote in, not the kid. But I have heard from people who, like you, were uncomfortable with their kinks. Most researchers agree with Bering: There's really nothing you can do and masturbating to the porn that turns you on doesn't "reinforce" your kinks. You can't starve out your kinks by refusing to think (or wank) about them, and you can't pray your kinks away anymore than I could pray my gay away. Embracing your kinks and exploring them with other consenting adults—or if your kinks can't be realized for ethical reasons, enjoying them through solo or partnered fantasy play only—is the only realistic option.

That said, some doctors have prescribed antidepressants to people who were uncomfortable with their kinks. Those drugs don't selectively eradicate kinks; they crater a person's libido. Taking SSRIs would mean sacrificing the vanilla sex you enjoy with your partner on the same altar with the kink that stresses you out. I can't imagine you want to go down this route, BBW, which brings us back to embracing your kink and coming clean with your partner.

The risk you run telling a partner is no doubt at the forefront of your mind, because the consequences could be immediate, i.e. he might dump you. But not telling your partner about your kink isn't risk-free either. If he feels inadequate, if he feels like you're hiding something from him... he might dump you.

So share your kink with your boyfriend, BBW. Kinks should always be presented as crazy and endearing—and potentially really fun—quirks, not tragedies. You have a thing for big bellies, you don't have leukemia. And you can explore your kinks without gaining weight or stuffing your partner until he does. A little big-belly dirty talk could help you get off with your partner, and even the fittest person can push their tummy out and create the illusion of a rounded belly.

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